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Romania Expels 2 Russian Diplomats After 'Interference' Claim

By AFP

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Supporters of Romanian far-right presidential candidate Calin Georgescu take part in a protest against the government. a **DANIEL MIHAILESCU/AFP**

Romania on Wednesday ordered two Russian diplomats expelled, after slamming Russian "interference" and criticism of an indictment of far-right presidential candidate Calin Georgescu.

Russia's military attache and his deputy in Bucharest were declared "persona non grata" by Foreign Ministry of Romania, which is a NATO member country.

It said the two carried out activities contravening the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations, without giving details.

Local media reported that the deputy attache's name appeared in an investigation into Georgescu. Allegedly, one of Georgescu's associates telephoned the Russian embassy, seeking

to contact the deputy.

Georgescu — who denies any links to Moscow — shot to prominence almost overnight to unexpectedly win the first round of a presidential election last November.

Romania's constitutional court annulled the election just before the second round was to be held in December, after claims of Russian meddling and a "massive" social media promotion of Georgescu.

Last week, prosecutors indicted Georgescu on numerous charges, including making "false statements" over his campaign financing.

Russian secret services claimed the charges against Georgescu were "supported by the EU leadership," Romanian media reported.

The Romanian Foreign Ministry on Tuesday called the Russian allegations "ridiculous and completely unfounded."

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